

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GW, GE, WB, PINT

SUBJECT: CDU CHAIRMAN KOHL CRITICIZES SCHMIDT'S

HANDLING OF FEA AND TRANSIT DIFFICULTIES

1. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE IN BONN ON AUGUST 15, CDU CHAIRMAN KOHL ATTACKED FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HANDLING OF THE FEA AND TRANSIT PROBLEMS. KOHL SAID THAT SCHMIDT'S ACCESSION TO THE CHANCELLORSHIP HAD BEEN GREETED AS PROBABLY BRINGING A GREATER SENSE OF REALITY TO OSTPOLITIK, BUT HAS NOW COME TO SIGNIFY REVERSES. KOHL CHARGED THE GOVERNMENT WITH INDECISIVENESS VIS-A-VIS THE TRANSIT DISRUPTIONS AND SAID BONN HAD BEEN REDUCED TO A POSITION OF HELPLESSNESS AS REGARDS THE FEA. THE GDR MUST BE MADE TO UNDERSTAND THAT TREATY VIOLATIONS WILL NOT BE HONORED WITH LARGE-SCALE ECONOMIC BENEFITS, KOHL SAID, ADDING THAT BERLIN IS STILL THE TOUCHSTONE OF EAST-WEST DETENTE.

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2. RESPONDING FOR THE GOVERNMENT, DEPUTY PRESS SPOKESMAN GRUENEWALD ON AUGUST 16 SAID THAT THOSE WHO KNOW THE RECORD WILL CLEARLY SEE THERE IS NO BASIS TO KOHL'S ASSERTION. HE ADDED THAT MATTERS SUCH AS THE FEA AND THE TRANSIT PROBLEMS WERE AND WILL BE CLOSELY SYNCHRONIZED WITH THE THREE ALLIES.

3. COMMENT: AS IN THE PAST, BERLIN TROUBLES CAN EASILY BECOME A FOOTBALL IN GERMAN DOMESTIC POLITICS. KOHL IS ANXIOUS TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF LEADERSHIP AND DECISIVENESS, AND HIS CRITICISM OF SCHMIDT ON THE FEA ISSUE SHOULD BE SEEN PRIMARILY IN THIS PERSPECTIVE. HIS MENTION OF "LARGE SCALE ECONOMIC BENEFITS" PRESUMABLY REFERS TO RECENT PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE EXTENSION OF THE FRG "SWING" CREDIT TO THE GDR. VOICES HAVE BEEN RAISED IN FAVOR OF USING THE "SWING" AS A MEANS OF COUNTER-PRESSURE AGAINST GDR MEASURES ON THE TRANSIT ROUTES. MORE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE HEARD ON THIS ISSUE IN THE FUTURE.

HILLENBRAND

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